

Top Ten Transition Tips for Children in Care starting a new setting



Hampshire
County Council

Virtual School

We all know that when children start at a new setting, they can display a range of emotions....For our Looked After Children who may have experienced severe trauma and loss, making sure that you and your team at your setting go 'above and beyond' with transition arrangements to 'the norm' is vital.



The Triangle of Trust.

To build a **strong** and positive relationship between the Key Person, the child's Parent/Carer and the child, arrange for additional visits to the new setting in the term before they start. The visit could be at the beginning or end of the day and also involve the Key Person from the child's current setting.

- Visit one is about all the key adults and the child spending time together exploring the new learning environment.
- Visit two - the focus is the transfer of trust from the current Key Person to the new Key Person and if the child is confident, some time spent engaged in play with their new Key Person.
- Visit three - the focus is to have time together letting the child take the lead.

Don't forget, spending time with Carer/Parent sharing concerns and answering questions to make sure the individual needs of that child and family, is really important too. This child needs to learn that you can be trusted and that you like them **no matter what!**

Above and beyond

Use the 'All about me' information to find out what you can do to make that child feel comfortable straight away. For example playing their favourite music, is the child's favourite toy always available just for them! Are there some special books that only they can read and not have to share with others?



Contact over the Summer Holidays

Is there a way to let the child know they are being 'kept in mind' over the summer break? Postcards from key adults or for them to send, something to look after and return (more on that below!), or a visit at the very start of September are all good ways of easing the summer 'gap'.

Holding in Mind - Big Ted little Ted

This idea will help the child to know that their new Key Person is thinking about them, even though they are not with them. It helps to build a positive relationship and sense of connection through shared experiences. The Key Person sends a 'twin' teddy bear to the child. Key Person has Big Ted and child has Little Ted. Each takes photos of activities they are doing with Ted and share these photos through Tapestry for example or email. Some of the activities shared could be: looking at a book, going for a walk, eating lunch – just those ordinary everyday things. Alternatively, you could focus on a transition object. For example, lend the child a book that has to be brought back, or a toy or a puzzle. Something that the child needs to look after and then return safe and sound when they next see you.





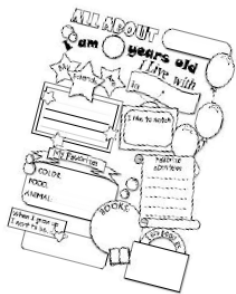
Why am I important? Finding out all about 'me'!

This group of children and their families may need extra consideration and care. Be aware that what seems simple and obvious about starting at your setting or school to you....may not be to them.

All about me...

Talk to me about:... Who is special to me.... Who is in my family...What do I like to cuddle at night....I am happy when.... My favourite memory is.... I am scared when...If I am angry you can help me by... If I am sad you can help me by...?

Don't forget to gather this information from a range of sources, which includes carers/parents, Social Workers, other professionals and **the child**



What to expect when...Create a calendar or timeline of visits across the summer term and holidays so the child can prepare for what is happening.



Key person time +.

Try and ensure that the Key Person is the first person the child sees and has a chat with at the beginning of the session and the last person they see and have a chat with before they leave at the end of the session.

Make time for a regular 'check in' throughout the session.. a thumbs up, eye contact or even a smile across the room will show the child that they are being held in mind by that adult.

During the session plan in some 'one to one' time with the child, that will provide the opportunity for the child to feel valued. This could be playing a game, reading a book or hopping in the outside area, if possible, encourage the child to choose the activity.



Sharing book

Create a personalised story session specifically for the child. Pick a story you know will interest the child and refer to them by name throughout. This could be recorded or live through a video call.

Review your curriculum

Reflect on your planning and environment, consider that some children may not have the same family 'set up'? What will you do when its Mother's and Father's Day? ...be sensitive to circumstances when sharing books and stories...consider the words you use and the assumptions you make in everyday conversation, for example 'hometime' may not be their home, Grandparents and siblings may not be part of all children's lives. When mapping out key experiences consider the inclusive nature of the activities, for example when you plan trips out of school consider venues and locations that may be significant to individual children's past experiences.

Triggers

Be aware that there may be experiences that trigger a strong response from the child, this could be physical or emotional.

For example: Was the child taken in to care in Autumn – do leaves falling trigger a memory? Food can be a real trigger too... Do certain smells trigger a response? This could be from foods or people.



Any further questions?

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